

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 2766

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, CI, PE

SUBJECT: TRIP REPORT: CHILEAN REFUGEES

FOR S/R/ORM: WIESNER OR PAPPAS FROM JAMESON

1. FOLLOWING CONVERSATIONS WITH UNHCR, ICEM, VOLAGS, AND SELECTED LOCAL OFFICIALS IN BUENOS AIRES, SANTIAGO AND LIMA, FOLLOWING IS SITUATION OF CHILEAN REFUGEES IN THIRD COUNTRIES AND FOREIGN REFUGEES FROM CHILE IN THIRD COUNTRIES AND CHILE.

2. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 8000 CHILEAN AND THIRD COUNTRY REFUGEES IN BUENOS AIRES WITH ROUGHLY 100 ADDITIONAL ARRIVING WEEKLY. BOTH ARGENTINE NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND UNHCR FEEL THAT GREAT BULK OF THESE "REFUGEES" ARE ECONOMIC. FURTHER, GOA HAS INFORMED UNHCR THAT ALL RPT ALL CHILEAN NATIONALS ARE WELCOME TO REMAIN IN ARGENTINA. MOST OF 8000 CHILEANS IN ARGENTINA HAVE ENTERED AS TOURISTS AND ARE PURSUING RESIDENCE THROUGH NORMAL CHANNELS WITHOUT DECLARING THEMSELVES AS ASYLEES. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE RESTRICTED FROM LIVING IN BUENOS AIRES, MENDOZA AND BORDER REGIONS, AND ARE ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTIES FINDING WORK, THERE IS BASICALLY NO PROBLEM WITH THIS GROUP. NONETHELESS, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT UP TO 1000 CHILEANS ARE SEEKING TO RESETTLE IN THIRD COUNTRIES FOR EITHER PERSONAL REASONS OR PROBLEMS WITH GOA, BUT
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THERE IS NOTHING PRESSING ABOUT THEIR MOVEMENT, SINCE

THEY CAN REMAIN IN ARGENTINA.

3. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 140 FOREIGN REFUGEES FROM CHILE IN ARGENTINA WHO MUST LEAVE THAT COUNTRY. GOA HAS INFORMED UNHCR THAT IT WILL ACCEPT NO RPT NO FOREIGN REFUGEES FROM CHILE. IT APPEARS THAT MOST OF THIS GROUP WILL GO EITHER TO AUSTRALIA OR CANADA AND NO MAJOR PROBLEM IS EXPECTED.

4. THE ARGENTINE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IS APPROACHING BANKRUPTCY. THEY ARE QUICKLY RUNNING OUT OF FUNDS FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO CHILEAN REFUGEES IN ARGENTINA AND ALSO MATCHING FUNDS TO HELP WITH PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT OF THESE REFUGEES IN THAT COUNTRY.

5. IN CHILE, THERE REMAIN ONLY SOME 40 FOREIGN REFUGEES TO BE RESETTLED. UNHCR PLANS TO RE-INTERVIEW THIS GROUP AND REFER THOSE WHO DESIRE RESETTLEMENT IN THE U.S. TO THE CONSULATE IN SANTIAGO. UNHCR HAS BEEN INFORMED WHAT GROUNDS OF ELIGIBILITY MUST BE MET BY THESE PERSONS AND THAT WE WILL ATTEMPT TO FURNISH THEM WITH A REPLY ON THESE CASES WITHIN A MAXIMUM OF TWO TO THREE WEEKS AFTER CASES ARE SUBMITTED TO US. REFUGEES WILL NOT APPLY TO OTHER COUNTRIES DURING THIS PERIOD. IN ORDER TO MEET THIS TIME FRAME THE EMBASSY WILL SEND SECURITY CHECKS REQUESTING 48-HOUR REPLY FROM POSTS AND WILL SLUG TELEGRAMS TO DEPT. FOR ATTENTION PAPPAS OR JAMESON, ORM. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED CASES, FAMILY REUNION FOR THOSE REFUGEES ALREADY PLACED IN OTHER COUNTRIES WILL INVOLVE PERHAPS 1000 OR MORE. UNHCR IS LEAVING A PERMANENT REP. IN SANTIAGO AND ICEM WILL KEEP PERSONNEL IN SANTIAGO TO DEAL WITH THIS GROUP. IT APPEARS THAT ICEM WILL NEED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE THIS PROGRAM.

6. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE SOME 3-4000 CHILEAN REFUGEES IN PERU. THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED THESE PEOPLE ON A STRICTLY TRANSITORY BASIS--USUALLY 90-DAY TOURIST VISAS--AND IS UNWILLING, FOR A VAR-CONFIDENTIAL

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REASON OF REASONS, TO ACCEPT THEIR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT IN PERU. UNHCR IS CURRENTLY SETTING UP A NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO ASSIST THESE REFUGEES AND IS WORKING OUT AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT TO MOVE THEM TO THIRD COUNTRIES. IT APPEARS THAT UNHCR WILL OBTAIN AN EXTENSION ON VISAS OF THESE PERSONS IN ORDER TO HAVE TIME TO FIND COUNTRIES OF PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT. ICEM WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENTS.

7. BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH UNHCR IN BUENOS AIRES, DEPT. CAN EXPECT AN APPEAL FOR FUNDING FOR VARIOUS PHASES OF THE CHILEAN REFUGEE PROGRAM. A SEPARATE APPEAL WILL BE MADE FOR RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CHILEANS IN PERU. THESE APPEALS SHOULD BE FORTHCOMING FROM GENEVA IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS: -) THAT WE ATTEMPT TO INSTITUTE A PAROLE PROGRAM FOR CHILEAN REFUGEES IN PERU ALONG THE LINES OF THAT USED FOR SANTIAGO. HOWEVER, THIS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED BY SENDING ONE PERSON FROM INS AND ONE FROM S/R/ORM TO LIMA FOR UP TO TWO TO THREE WEEKS AS A SELECTION AND PROCESSING TEAM. THIS TEAM SHOULD BE SENT AFTER UNHCR HAS SUBMITTED LISTS (I.E., ESTABLISHING THAT THERE IS INDEED A SIGNIFICANT CASELOAD IN PERU) AND SECURITY CHECKS ARE COMPLETE. CONSULATE LIMA WILL REQUIRE ADDITIONAL CLERICAL ASSISTANCE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE PROPER LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR TEAM. WITH INS PRESENCE, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO USE PAROLE AS OPPOSED PRE-PAROLE AND HANDLE PROGRAM WITHIN TWO TO THREE WEEK TIME FRAME. PROBLEM OF REUNITING REFUGEES WITH FAMILIES STILL IN CHILE SHOULD BE DEALT WITH LATER. 29 U.S. SHOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY TO APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO UNHCR FOR CHILEAN REFUGEE PROGRAM. UNHCR SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT CONTRIBUTION IS ALSO TO INCLUDE ICEM AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE NEEDS. IF APPROPRIATE, A PORTION OF THE CONTRIBUTION MIGHT BE EARMARKED FOR THOSE NEEDS. SUGGEST SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION. MAGNITUDE WILL PROBABLY BE \$150,000 TO \$300,000, THROUGH SPECIFIC NEEDS CAN BETTER BE DETERMINED UNHCR NEW YORK AND GENEVA.
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